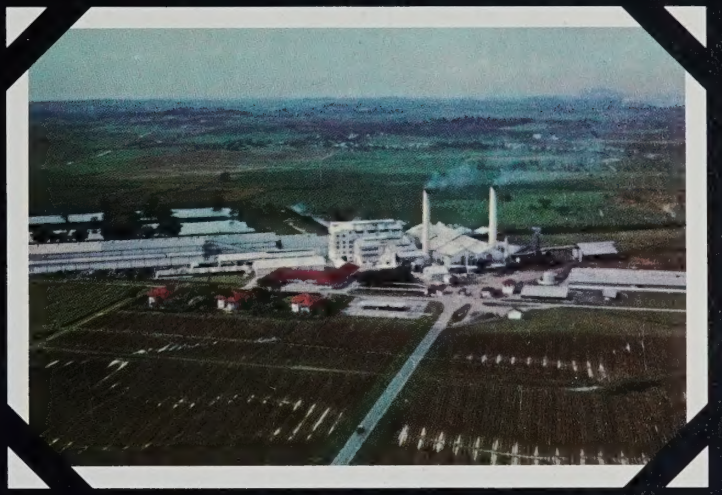
The Commonwealth Caribbean



Commonwealth and Citizenship Day

May 16, 1969

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Valma Connor, Mable Yankie, and Alister Roberts, pupils from Wesley Government School, Dominica, West Indies, recent guests of Cummer Avenue Public School, Willowdale, are seen presenting a gift to Education Minister William G. Davis.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

For a number of years now, the brochures for Commonwealth and Citizenship Day in the schools of Ontario have focused on themes which were primarily domestic. I am pleased, therefore, that we are looking beyond Canada, and that the Commonwealth nations of the Caribbean area have been selected for attention this year. Ontario students should be aware of Canada's place in the world community and, more particularly, of our place in the Commonwealth of Nations.

As noted elsewhere in this brochure, Canada has special ties with the Caribbean, not the least of which is the fact that we are the only Commonwealth nations in the Americas. In addition, we share common ties of language, history, and trade.

The Ontario Department of Education and schools in this Province have had a special bond with the Caribbean, first through Operation School Supplies and, more recently, through Project School-to-School. The latter program provides the vehicle for imaginative and significant dialogue between Ontario students and their counterparts in the Caribbean. This dialogue takes the form of the exchange of letters, pictures, and art work, through which information and insights truly relevant to the participants are shared.

During recent times, a number of schools at both the elementary and secondary levels have completed student exchange programs with schools In the Commonwealth Caribbean area. There can be no doubt that this face-to-face meeting of young people from different cultures is valuable. I am pleased to hear that an increasing number of Ontario students plan this type of out-of-school educational program in the months to come.

William G. Davis

WILLIAM G. DAVIS,
Minister of Education.

INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth Caribbean nations have been fragmented by both history and geology. As a result, they are cast over an area 1,800 miles from east to west and 1,700 miles from north to south. Although the majority of the inhabitants owe their cultural heritage to an African background, exploration and colonization by the Spanish, French, and British as well as immigration from the East Indies and other areas have contributed to many historical landmarks and geographical place names. Formed of limestones, corals, and volcanic rocks, the islands have an agreeable climate as a result of the sea that laps their shores. British Honduras and the newly independent nation of Guyana are the land members of the group.

Agriculture supports the largest number of workers but gradually, industrialization is taking place. In recent years, with improved travel and hotel facilities, tourism is being developed as an important support in the economy. In return for Canadian exports of flour, fish, meats, lumber, and newsprint, Caribbean nations ship bauxite, alumina, sugar, petroleum, molasses, bananas, rum, and citrus fruit juices to Canada.

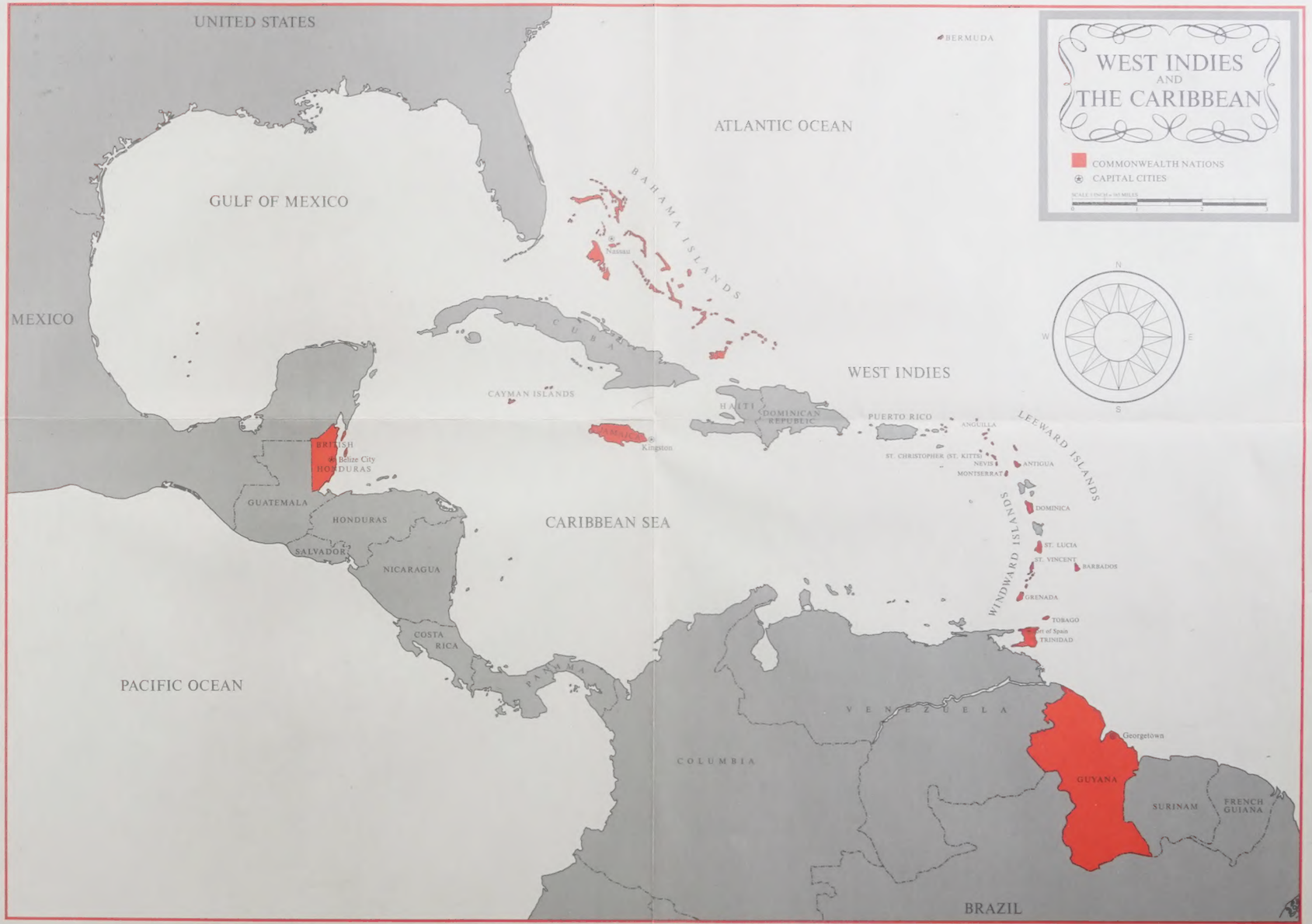
Few Ontario students have had direct contact with the Caribbean area. To assist students in developing an understanding of this unfamiliar geographical setting and an empathy for a different cultural milieu, this publication presents a suggested list of activities. Teachers may use these to stimulate student thought and participation, culminating in a program on May 16.

Student Activities

- The variety of island groupings and their political affiliations would provide students with an interesting exercise in mapping. A discussion of problems in transportation and communication in an island realm would show a vivid contrast to the Canadian problem of great land distance.
- The family life of the Caribbean people differs greatly from what is thought of as typically Canadian. Students might discover the differences in family ties, homes, food, and clothing between the two areas. Many tropical foods such as coconuts, bananas, limes, and molasses are available in most local food stores.
- As a result of exposure to some aspects of Caribbean culture in the form of recorded music and films, students might express an interest in putting a simple story to music or investigating native costumes and dances. The island peoples have developed some unique musical instruments such as the steel drum and the maracas.
- The most common song form of Caribbean countries is the calypso, an improvised ballad, usually describing current events and conditions. Many calypsos are never published but are kept alive by dance bands, and the fascinating rhythm and lyrics of these songs are enjoyed by both tourists and the residents of the islands. The School Twinning Calypso, **Join Hands and Hearts** was written by Trinidadians Mr. Kell Winzey and Mr. Darryl Dean in an effort on the part of the Ontario Department of Education to create a lasting bond between two cultures. This song was published by Gordon V. Thompson, Limited, 32 Alcorn Avenue,

NORTH AMERICA

THE CARIBBEAN



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PACIFIC OCEAN

MILLER SERVICES

Oxen are still used in Guyana to plough the rice-fields.

MILLER SERVICES

Workers are seen husking coconuts at a plantation in British Honduras.
Each man can husk between 3,000 and 4,000 coconuts in a day.

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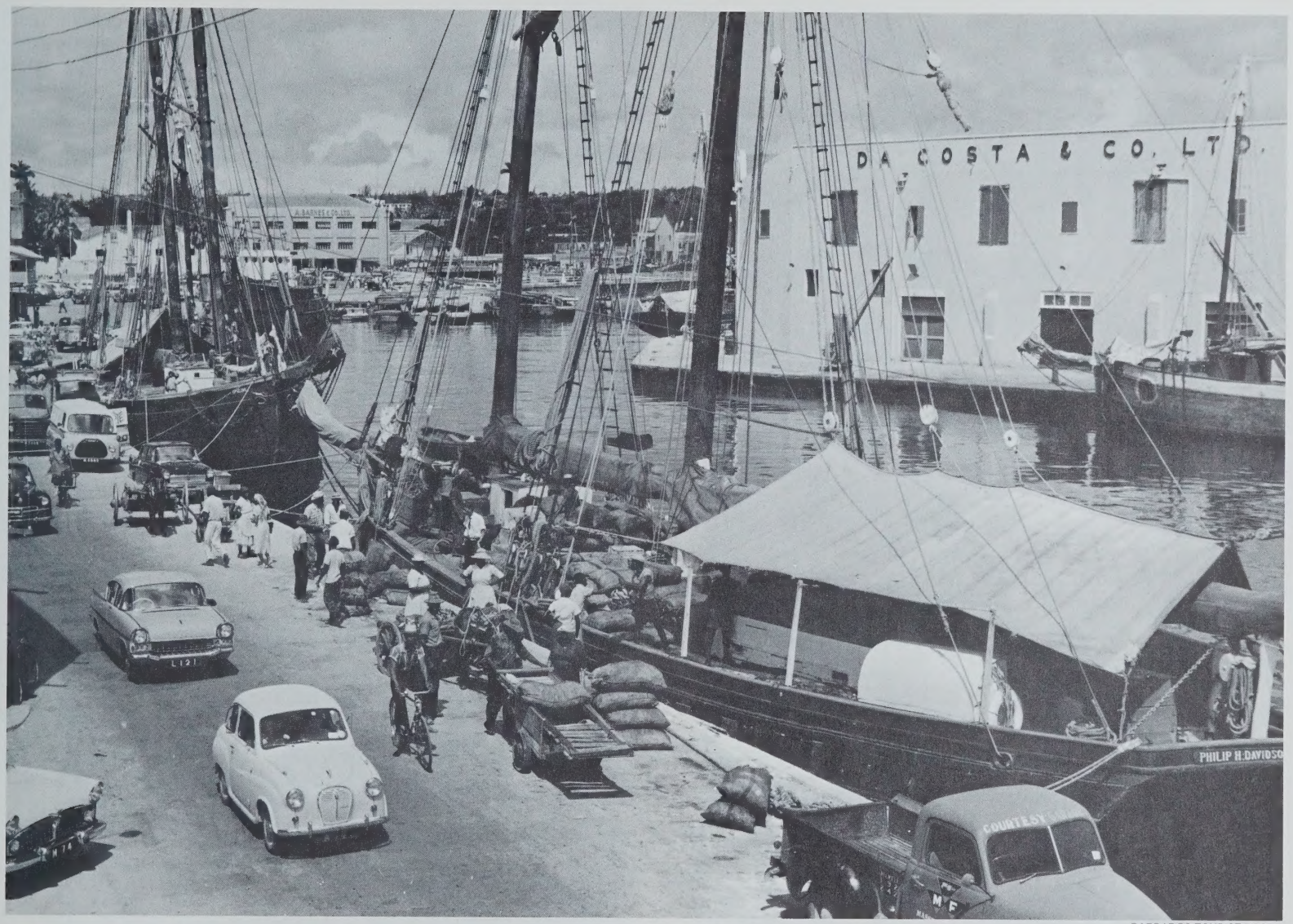
MILLER SERVICES

A worker at a bauxite mill in Guyana sets a conveyor in motion.
In the background is the alumina plant.

MILLER SERVICES

This picture shows part of an 800-acre citrus plantation in British Honduras.
In the foreground are oranges; the larger trees in the background are grapefruit.

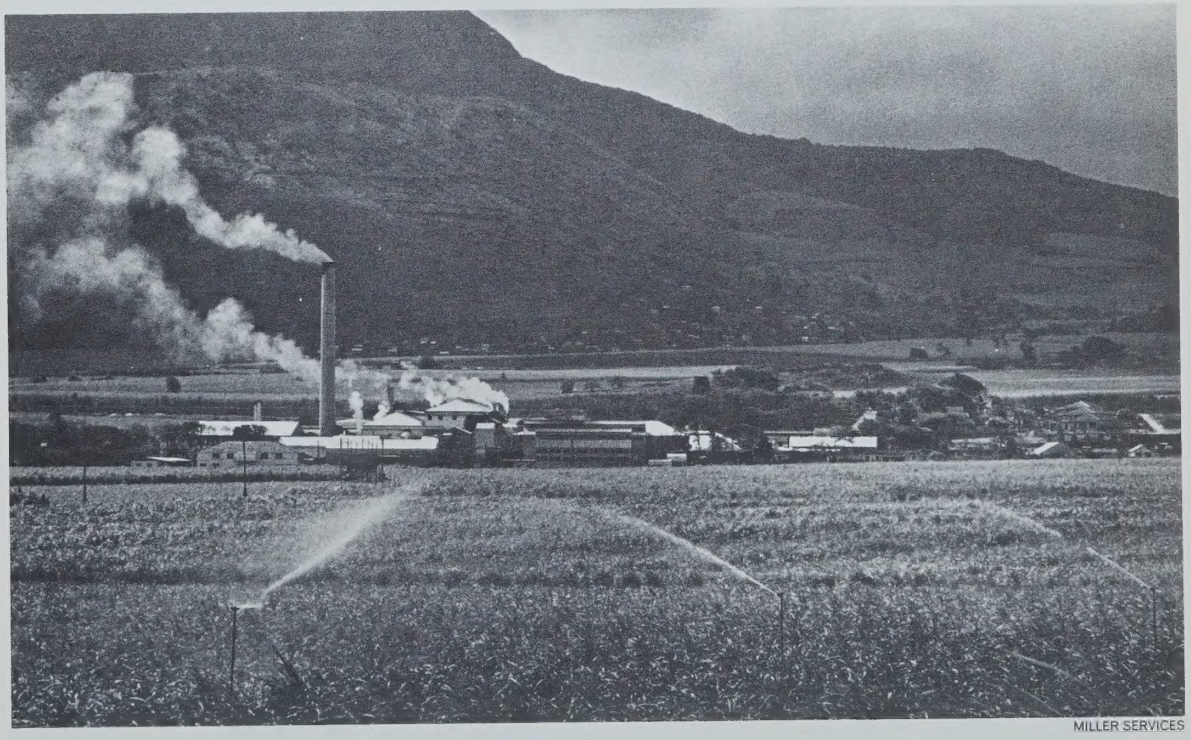


BARBADOS TOURIST BOARD

A harbour scene in Bridgetown, Barbados. The schooner in the foreground is unloading a cargo of coal. Ships such as these are commonly used for inter-island trade.

BARBADOS TOURIST BOARD

Labourers are shown cutting sugar cane in Barbados.



MILLER SERVICES

Caribbean nations are becoming increasingly industrialized in an effort to export their products in a finished state. This is a sugar refinery on the island of St. Kitts.

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

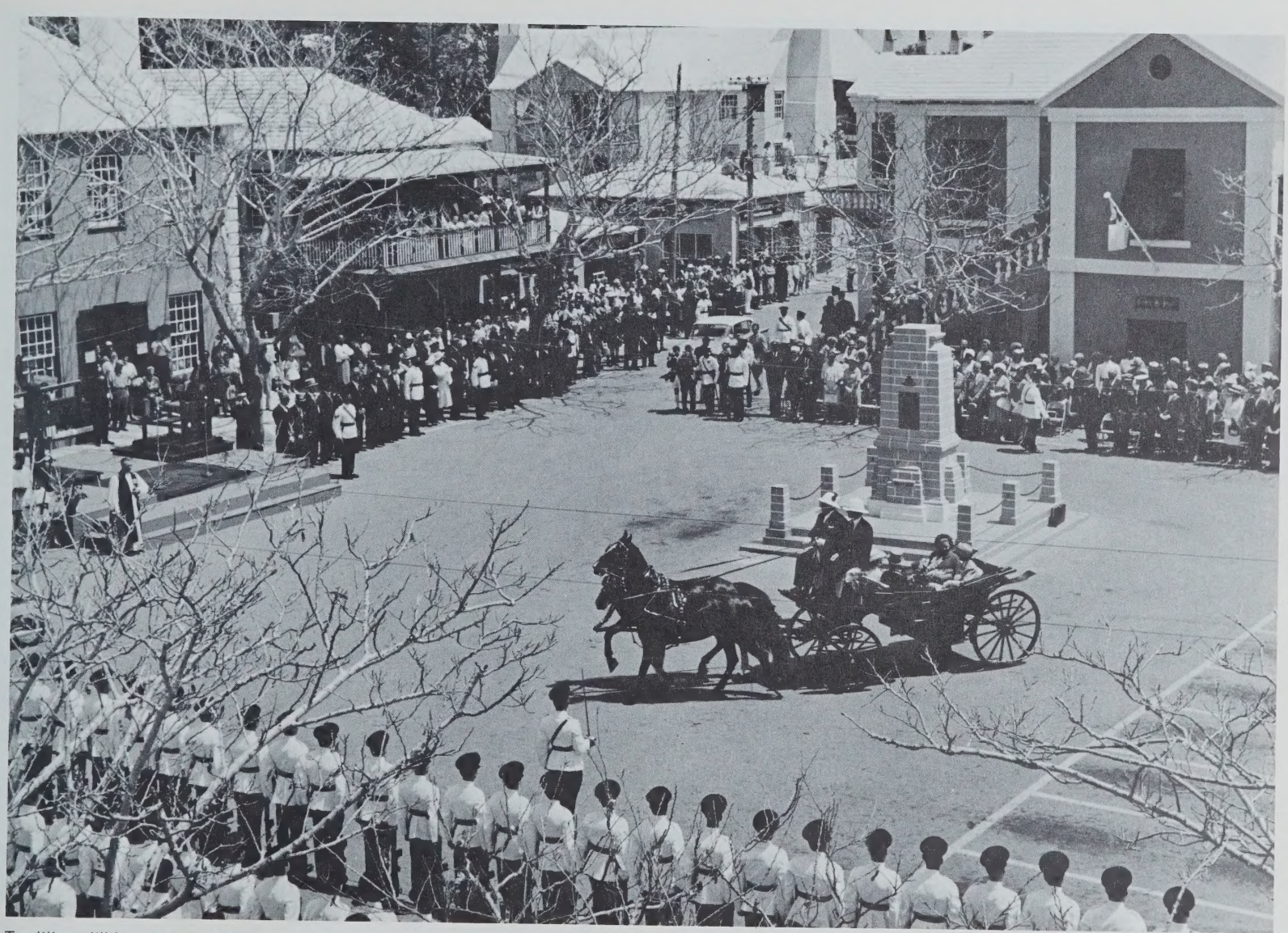
The towers of a modern cement company cluster against a backdrop of tree-covered Jamaican mountains. Workers from Kingston come to the plant each morning along the modern highway that hugs the shore-line.

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

Jamaicans, oblivious of the cruise ship in the background, go about their business on bustling Union Street in Montego Bay.

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

A plantation overseer rides over the grounds of Colbeck Castle near Old Harbour, on Jamaica's south coast. This imposing structure is believed to have been built towards the end of the 17th century and although it was originally constructed as a residence, it was planned to be easily transformed into a fort in times of emergency. Jamaica has many such ruins.

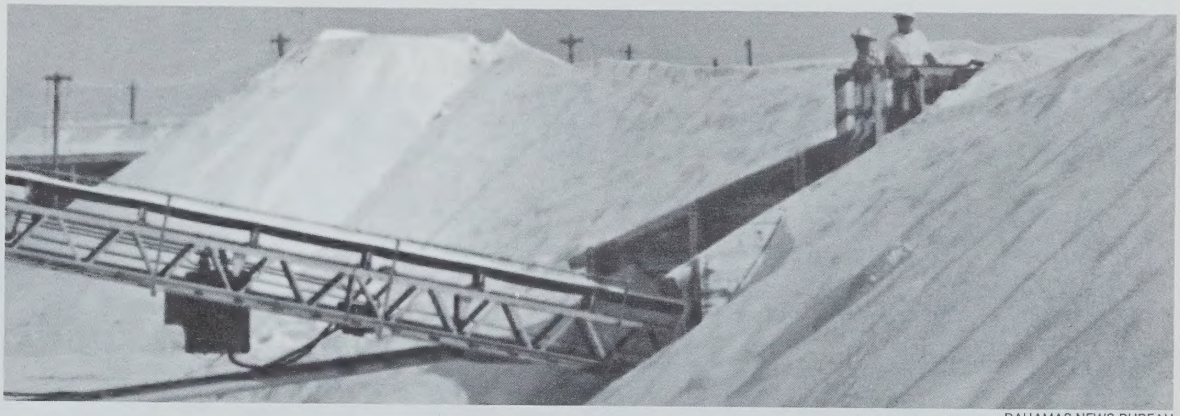


Tradition still has a place in Bermuda. Dignitaries arrive in King's Square, centre of the 350-year-old Town of St. George for one of Bermuda's annual ceremonies. Troops of the Bermuda Regiment are in the foreground.

BERMUDA NEWS BUREAU

JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD

This picture illustrates an example of conservation. Citrus trees are planted on land once mined for bauxite. In the background is the alumina mill.



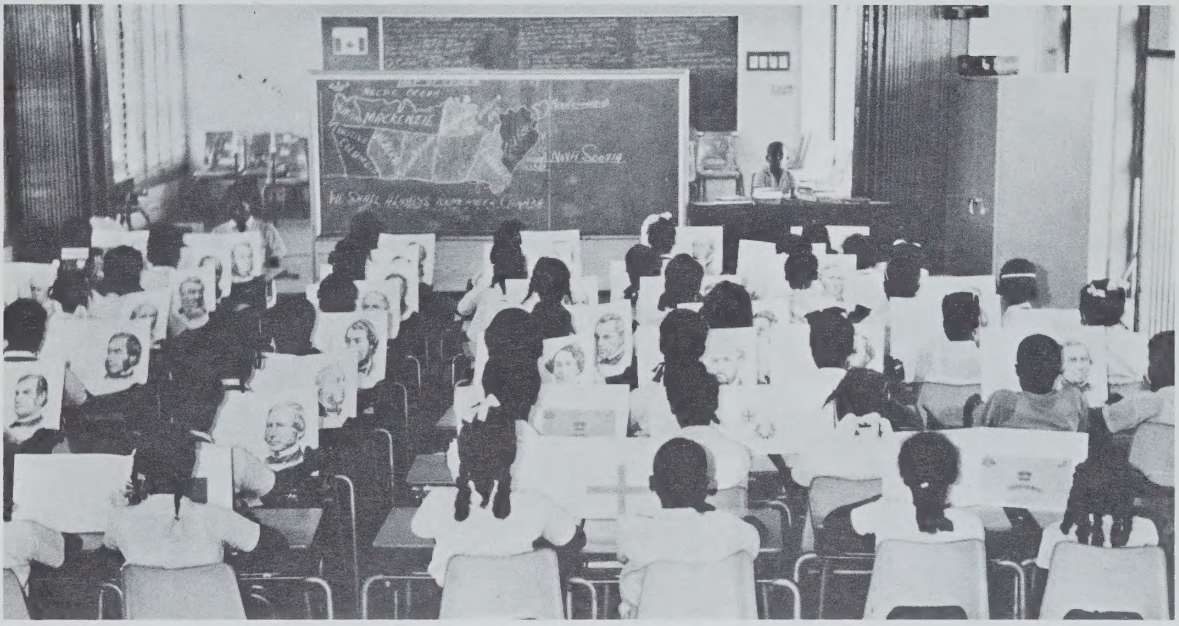
BAHAMAS NEWS BUREAU

Stockpiles of salt await shipment from the newly opened solar salt extraction plant at Long Island, Bahamas. This facility is expected to produce nearly 500,000 tons of salt annually for industrial and agricultural use.

BAHAMAS NEWS BUREAU

The new Bahamian stamps commemorating the islands' first gold coin issue. They make the Bahamas one of the few countries in philatelic history to depart from the traditional square or rectangular design in stamps.

Students of Cummer Avenue Public School, Borough of North York, are seen working on posters depicting their way of life. The completed projects will be sent to their twinned school in Dominica. These students, under the direction of their teacher, Miss E. Jenei, have already completed one exchange visit with their twinned school and are currently planning another, this one on a larger scale, for 1969.



Students of St. John's Canadian Gift School in Gouyave, Grenada are shown studying about Canada using teaching aids familiar to Ontario students. **O Canada** is sung daily in the opening exercises of this school.

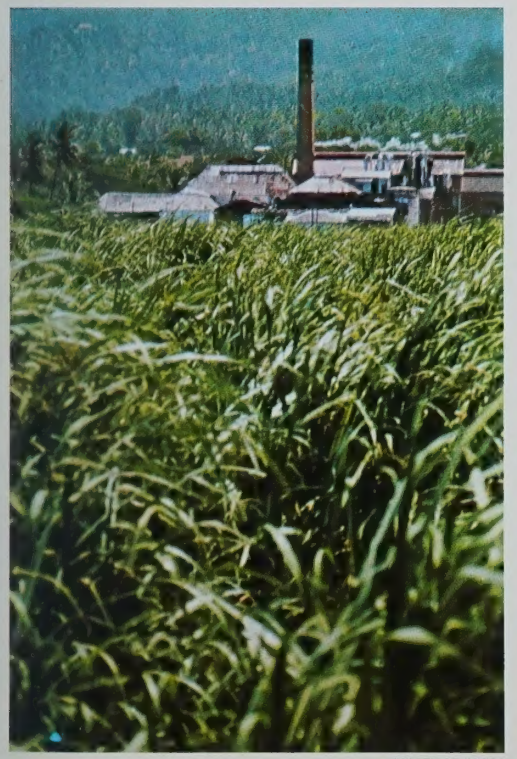
Toronto 7, Ontario. A limited supply of a record containing **Join Hands and Hearts** can be obtained free by writing the Co-ordinator, Special Projects Section, Ontario Department of Education, 40 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto 12, Ontario. The following other songs are suggested:

Jamaica Farewell—words and music by Lord Burgess, Chappell & Company Limited, 14 Birch Avenue, Toronto 7, Ontario.

Mango Walk, Marian—Songtime 7 Holt, Rinehart & Winston of Canada Limited, 833 Oxford Street, Toronto 18, Ontario.

Yellow Bird—Music 7 Ginn and Company, 35 Mobile Drive, Toronto 16, Ontario.

- The history of the Caribbean is filled with adventure and romance. Students will enjoy tales of the early explorers, the Spanish Conquistadores, the slave trade, and triangular trade with Europe and North America. Today, the nations are standing on the threshold of a new era in their history. Students may gain some insight into the pride and promise felt by the Caribbean people in the following poem:



MILLER SERVICES

JAMAICA

I saw my land in the morning
And O but she was fair
The hills flamed upwards scorning
Death and Failure here.

I saw through the mists of morning
A wave like a sea set free
Faith to the dawn returning
Dark tide bright unity.

I saw my friends in the morning
They called from an equal gate
"Build now: whilst time is burning
Forward before it's late."

The old Gods awake
Past and Future break
On as the voices roll
Move as a single whole
Forward
Forward
Forward
O country to your goal.

by Michael G. Smith
(reprinted by permission of the author)

- Students might be encouraged to exchange letters with pen-pals in the Caribbean area; teachers can arrange the details of such a project through the Special Projects Section of the Ontario Department of Education, 40 Eglinton Avenue East, Toronto 12. Students might exchange letters individually or as a class. In either case, they would probably want to give a clear picture of life in Ontario through both pictures and the written word.
- In many ways the history of the Caribbean area is linked with that of Canada. Students of Canadian history might search out these links. Students who investigate the history of the Caribbean will find a number of familiar names. Sir Isaac Brock, hero of the Battle of Queenston Heights in the War of 1812, was stationed in the West Indies from 1791 to 1793. One of Canada's Fathers of Confederation, John Hamilton Gray, was born in Bermuda, where his father was British consul for Bermuda and Virginia. Another Father of Confederation, Newfoundlander Sir Ambrose Shea, served as Governor of the Bahamas from 1887 to 1895. Jean-Baptiste Talon, when Intendant of New France, initiated trade with the West Indies in the 17th century.

- References to Commonwealth Caribbean countries appear regularly in the press and on television and radio. Special emphasis might be placed upon such items in current events.
- Ontario students who are engaged in local studies programs and who are also participating in Project School-to-School could exchange information about their community with their counterparts in the Caribbean.
- Many of the Caribbean countries have only recently gained independence. The process of self-determination could be examined from many points of view, and at a number of levels of sophistication, using Canada and Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean as examples. This topic might, for example, provide a theme for a class debate.
- Students who are stamp or coin collectors could prepare displays of the Caribbean portions of their collections. Such displays will undoubtedly prompt discussion on the geography, history, culture, flora, and fauna of the various countries.
- An appropriate activity for art students would be to exchange examples of work with young people in the Caribbean area. Arrangements for this exchange might be undertaken independently by schools or through the Special Projects Section of the Ontario Department of Education. Most students, both in Ontario and in the Caribbean, would probably be most interested in exchanging art which depicts the people and their daily activities in their respective locales.
- Possibilities for science activities are infinite with the great variety of tropical fish, flora, and fauna. Students might wish to grow some of the plants indigenous to Caribbean countries, to sample some of the fruits and vegetables imported from the area, and to examine the effects of climate on Canada and on the Caribbean.

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Films

West Indies (SS-139), Encyclopedia Britannica, Colour, Intermediate, 11 mins.
Portrays the principal West Indies Islands, and shows their strategic importance to Western Hemisphere trade, economy, and international relationships. Unique character of the tropic islands is shown in sequences on topography, climate, discovery, and peoples. Native farming, plantations, and export and import trade show tropical products. Recent trends are indicated.
Available from: Learning Materials Service Unit,
Ontario Department of Education,
559 Jarvis Street,
Toronto 5, Ontario.

Trinidad and Tobago, B. P., Colour
A beautiful film highlighting the industries and native attractions of Trinidad and Tobago. The tourist business is vital to the economy of the islands, and every effort is made to attract people to enjoy a visit to this part of the Caribbean.
Available from: Modern Talking Pictures,
1875 Leslie Street,
Don Mills, Ontario.

The West Indies: Geography of the Americas, Coronet, Colour, 11 mins.
Stressing the varied population, terrain, resources, and opportunities for economic growth of the islands, this film examines modern trends toward industry and the older traditions of large plantations and small farms raising a large variety of semitropical food crops.
Available from: Sovereign Film Distributors,
277 Victoria Street,
Toronto 1, Ontario.

Pamphlets and Maps

Pamphlets and maps are available from:
The Bermuda Trade & Development Board,
85 Richmond Street West,
Toronto 1, Ontario.

Long-Playing Records

On Tour, Esso Trinidad Steel Band, Arc Sound Limited.
The Caribbean TradeWinds, The Trade Winds, R.C.A. International.

Bibliography

Augelli, John P. ed. **Caribbean Lands.** Fideler, 1965.
This illustrated survey of the geography, history, economy, and culture is a useful resource. (Intermediate).

Caldwell, J. C. **Let's Visit theWest Indies.** Rev. ed. Day, 1963.
A general account of the geography and history of the islands is followed by a brief treatment of the people, customs, and products of the various islands. (Junior).

Cartey, Wilfred. **The West Indies; Islands in the Sun.** Nelson, 1967.
The history, culture, and sociology of the Caribbean lands is traced. (Intermediate).

Evans, Lancelot O. **The Caribbean in Pictures; the English-Speaking Islands.** Sterling, 1968. (Visual geography series).
With its copious illustrations and brief text, this is a useful, comprehensive introduction to the West Indies. (Junior and Intermediate).

Joy, C. R. **Young People of the West Indies: Their Stories in Their OwnWords.** Duell, Sloan, 1964.
West Indian boys and girls give accounts of their own countries. (Junior and Intermediate).

Life, eds. **West Indies.** Time Inc., 1963.
This is one of a series of works which is well known for its coloured illustrations. (Intermediate).

MacPherson, John. **Caribbean Lands; A Geography of the West Indies.** 2nd ed., Longmans, 1967.
Students will find this textbook a useful reference. (Intermediate).

Sherlock, P. M. **The Land and People of the West Indies.** Lippincott (McClelland and Stewart), 1967.
This overview of the history and way of life of the area emphasizes the individual character of the various islands. (Intermediate).

Sherlock, P. M. **West Indian Folk Tales.** Walck, 1966.
This anthology has been prepared by a distinguished scholar from the West Indies. (Junior).

Picture Credits (Cover)
Upper Left: MILLER SERVICES
Lower Left: MILLER SERVICES
Upper Right: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO TOURIST BOARD
Lower Right: TRINIDAD & TOBAGO TOURIST BOARD

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